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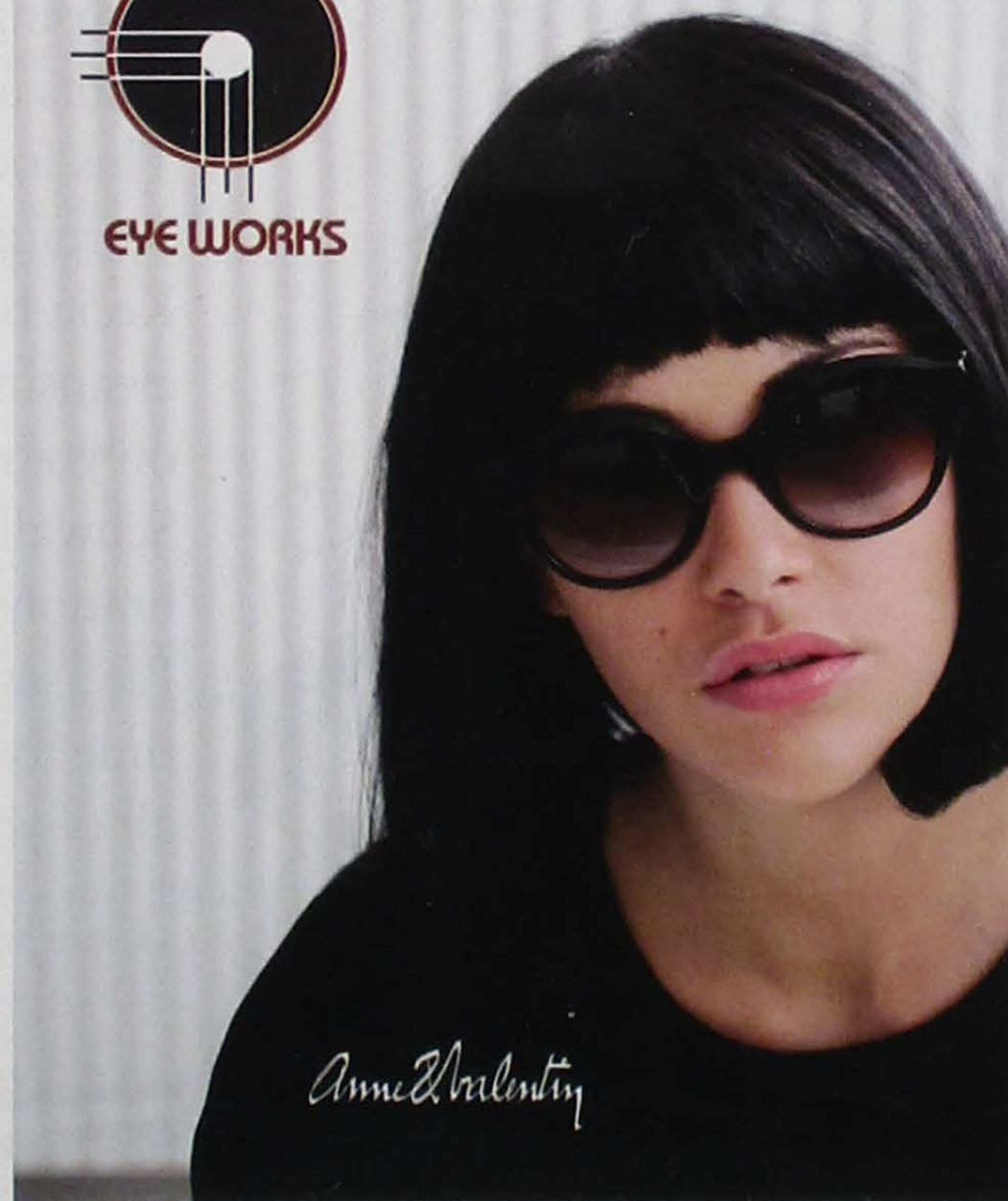
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ON THE COVER:
Photo by Jane Degeneffe

Spring cleaning can be fun and exciting for some and tiresome for others. Out with the old and in the warmth of summer! Things that come to mind when I hear the phrase “spring cleaning” are going through the closet, deep cleaning my home and opening the windows to let in the fresh air. But there are many different ways to spring clean. Todd and Jan suggest focusing our spring cleaning on the plants and critters around our homes. This focus helps you stay alert to your surroundings year-round. Jane and Kecia bring the idea of cleaning and cleansing in to a personal view, to focus on your body, mind and soul. Karen Schwaller and Mary Clare share celebrations of life and memories and Karen Petersen shares a couple of tips just in time for tax season. I wish you luck on all of your spring cleaning endeavours!

— Margo Niemeyer

FEATURES



7 | LIFESTYLE

In this Moment offers guidance to cleanse the mind, body and soul.

15 | CULTIVATE

When to groom gorgeous grasses and which grasses need more attention than others.



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The Three Spanish Dances
Noches en los Jardines de España
Symphony No. 3 in F Major, Op. 90

Supported by Ames International Orchestra Festival Association
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DEPARTMENTS

6 | FAMILY

Karen Schwaller shares the importance of the grungy, old farm cap.

11 | RECREATION

Don't forget your backyard friends when you are in the cleaning groove.

14 | RECREATION

Rocky Mountain National Park celebrates 100 years.

18 | TRAVEL

Tips to packing the perfect tote for a plane ride or weekend trip.

20 | PROVIDE

Karen Petersen simplifies the tax preparation process.

21 | LIFESTYLE

Seven ways to get creative with kitchen storage.

22 | LIFESTYLE

Spring Bridal ExCytement photo review

24 | BEAUTY

Wedding season is almost here. Mary Clare has salon service suggestions for future brides.

26 | FITNESS

Kecia suggests ways to get out of that fitness rut and keep going.

28 | SAVOR

For a great healthy meal, try baked salmon and kale in moroccan-spiced tomato sauce.

29 | NUTRITION

Bring the green foods into your diet. Nicole shares a few greens and their nutritional offerings.

30 | FACETED WOMAN

Mary Frahm

The Chieftains
with Paddy Moloney

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The farmer's cap

KAREN SCHWALLER
Contributing writer

Ladies, don't lie to me now. I know you've done it. I've done it. But we'll go to our graves with the one secret that could send us there early in the first place ... I may have thrown away a farm cap or two in my days of spring cleaning as a farm wife.

The truth is, if I don't recognize the caps and they look like they've been squished into a vacuum-sealed package that might have gone on the Apollo 13 mission, then would they even notice if one just found its way into the garbage bag on trash burning day? The answer is ... of course they would notice!

The farmer has a special connection to that which connects to his head. My dad had hundreds of them — but he always wore the same grease-soaked one or two.

Like excuses for not dusting, farm caps are a dime a dozen, and farmers will never pass up a new cap. If offered one I might say, "No thanks, I already have 284 caps at home — I don't need another one." My husband, on the other hand, reasons that you just take them because they're giving away caps.

"Some of them are too cool not to have," I was once told by one of our sons.

Not that long ago, I had grown tired of our guys' collection of caps that were growing beards in our porch and basement. I hadn't even seen these caps on any of the guys for months

— possibly years. I made the executive decision to get rid of some, and I got a large garbage sack and began stuffing hats into it as I rejoiced silently. We would now have an additional 800 or 1,000 square feet in the house for more useful things.

When I finished gathering the caps and had tied the bag shut, I was halfway across the room in the basement on my way to the stairs to take them up to the attic, when my husband came into the house. Knowing that I would be paying apartment rent if he knew I was planning to dispose of those sacred head pieces, I immediately did an 'about face' and stuffed them into a busy corner before he actually got to the basement.

I acted calm and cool. I should have received an Oscar for my performance.

A few weeks later I seized an opportunity to get them to the attic without him seeing ... relishing the fact that I at least got the caps out of plain sight for the time being. After some time had passed, my husband asked, "Where are all those caps that were over there?"

("Nerts!", I thought to myself.) But I said calmly, "They're in the attic. Why?"

Incredulously, he wanted to know why they were up there. "We can't wear them if they're up there. Why are they up there, anyway?"

He was standing up for farmers against their wives everywhere. Lucky for me I hadn't burned the caps right

away; I would've probably been paying apartment rent and child support as well.

I have to say, though, that the farm cap can truly be a useful accessory. I'm told it makes a good holder for parts when you don't have anything else handy; it's a sweat catcher, cobweb duster, waver-downer of people, and was probably the original sun blocker before companies made billions with their rub-on kind. It's a holder of baby kittens, can make a little kid feel mighty big just by wearing one, and can even be used to hide underwear when blue jeans malfunction in front of mixed company. It can be part of a show of fatigue when removed and followed with a head scratch. It can also be a sign of respect to God or to someone of the opposite gender when it is removed in their presence.

Some days of the old west still live on in the modern day farmer's cap.

My most vivid memory of the use of the farmer's cap was a few years ago when, in an act of chivalry, my husband once used it to swat a fly that was on my back. (At least that's what he TOLD me.) I don't know if he got the fly, but the plastic adjuster on the back of the cap certainly swatted me very effectively.

Good thing he had his cap on as he drove, to shield the glare that was coming from inside the car. Yes, farmers' caps are useful, indeed ... if spring cleaning wives don't find them.

"Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed, is more important than any other one thing."

— Abraham Lincoln

In this Moment

BY JANE DENEGER
Contributing writer

At the beginning of each new year we all have hopes and dreams about what the future may bring. We sometimes try to clear out and Spring clean the previous year's clutter to bring in a freshness of possibilities for the new year. Yet, in reality, we sometimes struggle within, and find that internal issues (like chronic, physical or emotional pain, anxiety, worry, or unresolved relational issues) can hinder our hopes from blossoming. The beauty at hand can be missed.

The elegance of nature can be overlooked, or unappreciated. Our perspective becomes cluttered with fear instead of anticipation of the potential a day can bring.

Abraham Lincoln was a man who overcame many obstacles. Poverty and circumstantial loss did not prohibit him from having vision for something better. Living in the moment was sometimes the simple task of reading new books and acquiring knowledge about the world around him. From Doris Kearns Goodwin, author of "Team of Rivals" we hear about his great perspective. "Though untutored

in the sciences and the classics, he was able to read and reread his books until he understood them fully. 'Get the books, and read and study them,' he told a law student seeking advice in 1855. It did not matter, he continued, whether the reading be done in a small town or a large city, by oneself or in the company of others. 'The books, and your capacity for understanding them, are just the same in all place ... Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed, is more important than any other one thing.'"

MOMENT, page 8

MOMENT Continued from page 7

To “bear in mind” something of value then, can become a great solution to everyday obstacles. A modern term for bearing in mind is called “mindfulness.” Simple, yet effective ways of thinking. Organizations such as Alcoholics Anonymous have slogans to beckon our attention. Live and Let Live, One Day at a Time, First Things First, Easy Does It, This Too Shall Pass, Keep it Simple, all capture our understanding in ways that we can grasp hold of within each moment.

Church organizations and religious or spiritual outreaches help us to formulate our private world when it’s quite possible that just reading the daily newspaper can bring on an onslaught all its own; adding to the internal struggles we already wrangle with.

Judeo-Christian faith holding people use the vehicle of prayer to cleanse and center their

minds and hearts during the battles for peace, in order to wait in hope upon God for help.

Buddhist philosophy calls this way of life centering. Visualizing a better outcome of problems and suffering through an “eightfold path” of right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness (awareness of body, feelings and thought) and right concentration (meditation) can be a discipline that lends itself

Forgiveness cleans our ‘house’ and lifts burden.

If you have a trophy case full of offenses that others have caused you it will be important to make room for the trophies of how others have blessed you. We all have experienced both, and we tend to celebrate one or the other. Celebrate blessing.



Ames area life coach, Paul Nelson has a life coaching business called Live Your Vision, www.liveyourvisioncenter.net. He commented on the question about benefits of being mindful. “... the secular

well to encouraging our hopes to blossom.

Secular counselors and therapist have many valuable options in exercising mindfulness. Remembering that being in the moment is also being aware of our surroundings, we are asking ourselves questions “What do I see? What can I hear?” instead of dwelling on the should’ve and could’ve’s that demand from us and drive us to a place of unrest. Being aware of comforts around us and people who love us, can help distill the anxiety of life’s woes. Learning a new way of ordering our thinking or lifestyle can become a positive in many ways.

approach: From brain research, we know that our DNA and environment combine to create quite literally patterns for the way we experience ourselves, our emotions and our sense of self. But it’s not as if these neural patterns in our brain are written in stone, and so we can be changed by changing how we react to our experiences (this is called neuroplasticity, i.e. our sense of self can change and we’re not fated to always be anxious-prone or depressive or whatever. *The religious or spiritual approach:* For me, Jesus’ approach of the lilies in the field is a really mentally healthy way to live for

anxious and depressed people. That is so because he points first of all to events outside of

Mindfulness allows us to see things clearly as they are, and brings out the best in any situation.

It connects us with the greater truth, thereby allowing us to make the necessary changes that put us more in alignment with our truth and purpose. The practical application is that it brings us closer to our goal, which is of benefit to all.

us, and second, he points to the way in which a lily doesn't fight to get its nutrition (i.e. the sun and rain, etc.)."

A dear friend of mine has been promoting the advantages of mindfulness as a life coach for the past five years and instructing yoga for six. Joan Ek, Owner/ Partner at The Flow Yoga and Wellness, also Owner and Founder at Life Spectrums LLC in Menasha, Wis. states, "Mindfulness allows us to see things clearly as they are, and brings out the best in any situation. It connects us with the greater truth, thereby allowing us to make the necessary changes that put us more in alignment with our truth and purpose. The practical

application is that it brings us closer to our goal, which is of benefit to all."

Rev. Deb Hill-Davis, Minister at Unity of Ames recognizes the need for a spiritual aspect as well as sees the actual physical release that comes into play through this spiritual search for serenity. "We are working through what Unity calls The Twelve Powers and one of these is the Spiritual Power of Renunciation. This is a Spiritual Power that allows us to release whatever we are holding in our consciousness that keeps us from our highest expression or realization of Good. Mindfulness is a process whereby we become present to what is here right now and let go of our attachment to everything else. It is a kind of radical acceptance that frees our energy from wishing or wanting what we don't have or trying to get rid of what we don't want. In that process we can be truly present to what is, curious about it and responsive rather than reactive."

Ed Ruppert of Journey Counseling and Consultation here in Ames offers his perspective on our task of staying in the moment. "My day job is to offer counsel to people who may be experiencing difficulties in life, or who are wanting to increase their capacity to function in a healthier manner. The name of my solo practice

is "Journey Counseling" which implies movement ... All of life is about beginnings and endings. Socrates is attributed to the quote: 'The unexamined life is not worth living.' By implication this means that we have the capacity to be self-aware, and to the degree we exercise such examination, the more 'worth' our lives will have. Other than the inherent worth of each individual I would tend to agree. So, to be self-examining is to have self-awareness, and thus, to be 'mindful.' ... Forgiveness cleans our 'house' and lifts burden. If you have a trophy case full of offenses that others have caused you it will be important to make room for the trophies of how others have blessed you. We all have experienced both, and we tend to celebrate one or the other. Celebrate blessing."

Pastor John Kerr of Bethesda Lutheran church of Ames gently reminded his listeners in a sermon that people can enter into the "promised land" by constant renewal. He quoted Martin Luther who was asked about the cleaning of our hearts in the spiritual act of repentance. "How often shall we turn? Every day for the rest of your life." So today, in this moment, we can all (thankfully) begin again.

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FAMILY

Ask Mr. Dad:

Economic recovery? Not around here

BY ARMIN BROTT
Tribune News Service

Dear Mr. Dad: I lost my job more than a year ago and have been unable to find another. My wife works part time, but doesn't bring in nearly enough to cover our expenses. We have no health insurance, burned through the little savings we had trying to stay current on our mortgage and other bills. Now we're faced with having to take money out of our retirement accounts to make ends meet. I'm so embarrassed by this whole thing that I can barely face my children. What can we do?

A: I've been (and still am) in almost the same situation, so I definitely feel your pain. The good news is that you already took the first step: acknowledging that there's a problem. The bad news is that you're in for a bumpy ride. Here are some strategies that should help.

Buy some throat lozenges and get rid of any weapons you have around the house. I'm only half kidding. This may be the most frustrating and infuriating experience of your life; you're going to do a lot of screaming (hence the lozenges), and you don't want to do anything to hurt yourself or someone else. Believe me, it's tempting, though.

Ask for help. Start by talking with your mortgage company about refinancing your home or modifying your loan. But be prepared for an exercise in twisted logic. My lender told me that I made too much money to do a loan modification but not enough to refinance. There were other options available, but I didn't qualify because I was current on my mortgage. Apparently, being a responsible adult and paying my bills meant that I couldn't get help. Defaulting, however, would have made it a lot easier (try to avoid this).

Look into the Making Home Affordable Program. This actually

encompasses two separate programs, HARP (Home Affordable Refinance Program) and HAMP (Home Affordable Modification Program). The rules can be complex and seem designed to exclude as many people as possible. In my case, conveniently placed loopholes made me ineligible for any program. Check your eligibility here: www.makinghomeaffordable.gov/

Ready for more twisted logic? My income was so low that I wasn't eligible for Obamacare and had to enroll in Medicare. But then Medicare denied coverage because I have money in IRAs. If I take it out now, I have to pay penalties.

Apply for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps). Check your eligibility here: www.snap-step1.usda.gov/. Also look into local food banks.

Ignore the media. Every day there's a new story about the booming economy and dropping unemployment numbers. I've seen precious little evidence of that. Plus, those statistics are carefully manipulated to exclude all the people who have given up looking for work, who are working part time for economic reasons or who are under-employed. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics — the agency that calculates the "official" data — the true unemployment rate is roughly double the official one.

Use your situation as a lesson — if you can talk about it without scaring your children. Being in horrible financial straits (which, hopefully, won't go on too much longer), made me a lot more sympathetic to homeless people and others who access government benefits.

Get past embarrassment. You and your wife worked for many years, and a lot of the taxes you paid have gone to help people in need. Now it's your turn, and there's no shame in getting the help you deserve.

Spring cleaning

Don't forget your backyard feathered friends

TODD BURRAS
Contributing writer

Spring is in the air and with it comes a multitude of outdoor duties and tasks. Soon it will be time to wash the outside of your windows, sweep off the deck or patio, clean up the lawn furniture, rake up the leaves, pick up sticks and start thinking seriously about what kinds of plants to put in your pots and gardens.

And, if you're like Rachel Simmons and many others like her, spring is the time to get the yard ready for friends — feathered friends that is.

"There are many steps that can be taken to get a yard prepped for the arrival of passerines (perching birds) in the spring," said Simmons, a senior animal ecology student at Iowa State University who also serves as vice president of Big Bluestem Audubon Society. "First and foremost, it is important to remember that bird-friendly yards must offer food, water, shelter and nesting sites for birds."

PREPARING NESTING SITES

Getting birdhouses or nesting sites ready can be done in the fall, but if not, certainly by late winter or early spring.

"It's typically recommended that we clean birdhouses in the fall after the nesting birds have departed, but it's also good to make sure your houses are ready to roll in the spring," said

BIRDS, page 12



Tips for fledgling birders

T Tyler Harms is a young dad who also spends a lot of time leading children on field trips around the state as assistant director for Iowa Young Birders. Harms, who lives in Ames and works at Iowa State University, has a couple tips for introducing youngsters to backyard birding.



TYLER HARMS

For feeding birds, Harms recommends putting up a hopper feeder.

"It seems I have the best luck in my yard with a hopper feeder — those that look similar to an actual house," he said. "A number of species visit them, including chickadees, nuthatches, cardinals and doves, and they typically offer nice views of the birds for the kids."

A few words of advice, however.

"If you put them close to cover, but not too close to trees or buildings, it removes opportunity for the squirrels and it should work well," he said. "I fill mine with a 75-25 mix of black-oil sunflower seeds and sunflower chips."

When it comes to trying to attract nesting birds, Harms has another recommendation.

"As for a house in the city, a simple wren house would likely be best," he said. "They have the best chance of being occupied, and wrens are quick to occupy them once they are up, assuming they are in the neighborhood. Bluebird houses are also fun for kids, but you can't just put them anywhere."

Bluebird boxes work best in parks or rural settings.

Three websites Harms recommends for helping introduce kids to birding are:

- www.birdsleuth.org
- www.wildbirds.com/dnn/IdentifyBirds/KidsBirds/tabid/675/Default.aspx
- <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/pledge-to-fledge/>

— Todd Burras

BIRDS Continued from page 11

Tyler Harms, an assistant scientist II in the Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology at Iowa State University, who also serves as assistant director for Iowa Young Birders.

If you haven't cleaned out the nesting boxes already, March is a good time to do so. Start by removing all old nesting material that might harbor mites and insects as well as nesting debris from mice, which might have been built in the house over the winter. Next, scrub the house with a mild bleach solution of one part bleach to 10 parts water and let it air out in the sun.

If you don't have manmade nesting boxes already in your yard, it's not too late to put up some.

However, Linda Thomas, owner of Wild Birds Unlimited Nature Shop in Ames, said it's important to remember there are a small number of bird species compared to the total number that actually nest in manmade houses.

"The most common ones that you may have nest in your backyard are house wrens and black-capped chickadees, along with perhaps woodpeckers — downy, hairy and red-bellied being the most common," Thomas said. "Of course English house sparrows will try to utilize them as well so it's important to monitor the houses and remove their nests because they're a real menace to other songbirds and will often kill them."

Other common birds that utilize manmade nesting boxes, such as bluebirds, purple martins, wood ducks, tree swallows and some kinds of owls, among others, are fairly habitat-type specific. People living on the edges of town or in the countryside may find it easier

to attract some of the aforementioned birds.

"Nest boxes are like feeders," Thomas said. "Birds find them by sight, assuming habitat is appropriate for the species. So, it is important to get boxes up as early as possible so they are there when the birds begin arriving."

It's also important to note that with nesting birds, one size of dwelling doesn't fit all. The overall size, shape and size of the entrance hole are all important factors in attracting nesting birds to your yard.

"Nesting boxes should have good ventilation and mounted or hung appropriately for the species," Thomas said.

Besides cleaning the nesting boxes prior to the arrival of migrating birds or ahead of the time that overwintering birds begin seeking out nesting sites, repairing damaged boxes is something that should be done now.

"No different than our own homes, routine maintenance is very important to ensure our bird houses are attractive to nesting birds," Harms said. "Make sure the structure is in good order by unplugging drain holes and ensuring no pieces of the structure are broken."

BACKYARD BIRDING ESSENTIALS

Having manmade nesting sites established by late winter or early spring is one step to attracting and keeping birds in your backyard throughout the summer. But birds won't likely set up nests in your yard if they don't have ready access to food, water and natural shelter.

Simmons offers a number of recommendations as far as the food

No different than our own homes, routine maintenance is very important to ensure our bird houses are attractive to nesting birds

component is concerned, including:

- Make sure that feeders are clean and intact after the long, harsh winter months to avoid risk of illness and injury to the birds.
- Be sure to rake up accumulated hulls from beneath feeders and move feeders to new locations if necessary.
- Add more feeders if possible and keep the feeders spread throughout the yard to avoid stress from overcrowding at any one feeding station.
- Make sure that baffles and other pest guards are in working order. You want the birds to enjoy the fruits of your labor, not the raccoons and squirrels.
- Switch to more season-appropriate foods. Suet is great in the winter months, but less than ideal in warmer months. Some ideas include nectar for hummingbirds and orioles, grape jelly and orange halves for orioles, tanagers and grosbeaks, mealworms and fruit for thrushes, and calcium for nesting birds.

Thomas said the best way to make nectar is to remember the simple formula one part table sugar to four parts water and don't add food coloring. Just boil the water, add the sugar and let it cool. With nectar, jelly and fruit eaters, she said, it's vital to keep feeders cleaned and the food fresh.

"It's also important for folks to understand that many of these migrants may just be moving through and not nesting in the area, so enjoy them while you can," she said.

Water, too, is essential for birds, and Simmons, recommends the following:

- Make sure that birdbaths are clean and sterilized. Remove built-up algae and feces as these may promote illness.
- After freezing temperatures have passed, switch from heated birdbaths to non-heated designs.
- Try to place birdbaths next to trees or shrubs to offer the birds a sense of security. If a predator, such as a Cooper's hawk flies in, they're going to need somewhere to hide.
- Add some sort of sound element to attract the birds. Bubblers, misters and drippers are all great for this purpose.

SHELTER AND LANDSCAPING

Harms said anyone who really wants birds to use and enjoy their yard should consider providing natural food sources and other habitats.

"Planting native flowering plants are great for attracting hummingbirds, and planting some native shrubs, such as dogwood, serviceberry, wild plum or others, not only provide a natural food source for birds — mostly in fall when the shrubs produce berries — but also provide great nesting and winter cover for yard birds," he said.

A variety of natural food sources and habitats will naturally produce essential nesting materials, such as twigs, bark and grasses. But, Simmons said, there are a few materials people might not think of that birds often incorporate into their nest building.

"Even balls of hair and/or string are

useful," she said. "This may sound strange, but certain birds will readily use these materials when building their nests."

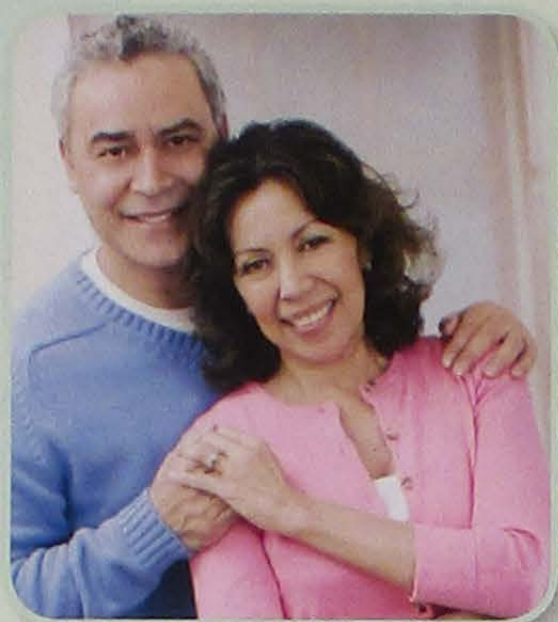
Simmons offered several other tips for sprucing up your backyard this spring in order to make it more inviting to a variety of birds:

- Make sure nesting boxes are protected from potential predators. This is often best achieved simply by placing houses in areas that are inconspicuous or are inaccessible to predators.
- Mounting new houses of different sorts is a great way to attract a greater variety of species. Take care not to place the nest boxes too close to each other.
- Rake lawn and leaves to stir up insects. Many birds, namely thrushes, towhees and thrashers, will appreciate this immensely.
- Prune trees and shrubs to promote spring growth.
- Leave brush piles in your yard. These make great shelter.
- Take steps to prevent window collisions. Decals, bird screens and moving houseplants away from windows are good steps to take.
- Try to minimize pesticide and herbicide use.

It's March, and spring is right around the corner. If you don't already, maybe this is the year to start giving a little thought to some of your backyard neighbors — the feathered ones that offer colorful theatrics to your eyes and music to your ears.

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RECREATION

Celebrate 100 years of Rocky Mountain National Park

BY LYNN O'ROURKE HAYES
The Dallas Morning News

Rocky Mountain National Park, which is just 90 miles northwest of Denver, is marking its centennial this year. Join in the celebration of this 415-square-mile wonderland. Here are five ideas to consider:

■ Join park rangers for wilderness and wildlife walks, full-moon snowshoeing events and nature talks. The resident pros will share insight and knowledge about the mountainous environment where more than 100 peaks rise above 11,000 feet in altitude and Longs Peak towers at 14,259 feet. A free junior ranger program is available for the youngest explorers.

Contact: nps.gov/romo/index.htm

■ Explore. Discover the magic of the park on foot and hike along 355 miles of trail, through spring wildflowers, summer greenery and fall colors. Fly-fish for native cut-throat or ride horses along scenic trails. Take in the Trail Ridge Road, the highest continuously paved highway in North America, for grand vistas and wildlife watching. For an extra thrill, rent a mountain bike and coast your way to the bottom.

Contact: visitestespark.com/things-to-do/outdoor-adventures/biking/; estesparkoutfitters.com

■ Watch. This expansive, peak-filled national park is known for its large animal population. There are ample opportunities for families to spot members of the elk herd. The fall rut or mating season is an

interesting time to witness the animals as they bugle and battle for supremacy. Look for as many as 800 elk grazing at lower elevations during the winter. Bighorn sheep and moose browse the willow thickets.

■ Listen. An array of festivals featuring music are scheduled throughout the year to celebrate the park's 100th year. Works by local composer Jerry Brubaker will highlight the Oratorio Society of Estes Park's RMNP Centennial Celebration Concert on June 12. Expect a performance by composer and poet Robert Charles Howard. Another RMNP Centennial Celebration Concert will feature the Colorado Wind Ensemble. Scheduled for Aug. 30, this program will showcase music reflecting the mood of the nation 100 years ago and performances that celebrate the outdoors.

Contact: estes-park.com/100-year-anniversary-Rocky-Mountain-National-Park

■ Participate. The Rocky Mountain Conservancy, a nonprofit organization that supports the park, has created centennial-themed classes for every member of the family. From art adventures to living history and primitive survival skills, there are options to intrigue your adventuresome clan. Other special events include the Centennial Re-Dedication Ceremony on Sept. 4 as well as rodeos, festivals and parades. Lodging options are available in Estes Park and Grand Lake, both just outside park boundaries.

Contact: visitgrandcounty.com; visitestespark.com

March is the traditional month to spiffy up the garden by cutting ornamental grasses back to the ground. Photo contributed by Jan Rigenbach

A snip in time...

JAN RIGGENBACH
Contributing writer

March is the traditional month in Midwest gardens for cutting down ornamental grasses. The goal is strictly cosmetic, clearing out the old brown leaves to make way for the fresh new green growth to come. And it's a whole lot easier to spiffy up the plants before brown and green are intertwined.

Cleanup of small grasses like blue fescue is easy. Grooming big grasses such as miscanthus can turn into a major task. Most species fall somewhere between. Because I've planted a lot of different ornamental grasses the last several years, I began to wonder how I was going to get the job done.

But wait! Not all ornamental grasses are created equal. Some of the ornamentals are cool-season grasses, much like a blue-grass lawn, which start greening up in early spring. Others are warm-season grasses,

more like buffalo grass, which don't green up until after the last spring frost. For the warm season grasses, there's plenty of time left to procrastinate.

So, which grasses are which? One of the first of the cool-season grasses to send up new shoots is blue fescue. Because its low tufts of narrow, blue-green blades retain color throughout the winter, I sometimes forget to cut back the old foliage early in the season, and end up with the tedious job of pulling out the brown blades later on.

Feather reed grass, one of the most widely planted of the ornamentals, is another cool season grass that is early to start greening. So is blue oatgrass, which grows in a spiky ball of semi-evergreen foliage and still looks so pretty I hate to cut it back. And tufted hair grass, also semi-evergreen; it produces billowing, fine-textured masses of small flowers. And Junegrass, an early-blooming native that makes a fine companion for prairie wildflowers.

Don't expect to see new shoots anytime soon, though, of a warm-season grass like miscanthus, also known as Japanese silver grass. Hardy varieties of fountain grass such as Hamlyn and Little Bunny also wait for warm weather to start growing.

Most of our native prairie grasses are also warm-season grasses. Little bluestem, switch grass, prairie dropseed and Indian grass all take their time greening up. There's still plenty of time left to tackle their cleanup.

When an ornamental grass starts producing all its new shoots in a circle around a dead center, it's signaling that it's time to dig and divide that plant. Some, such as miscanthus, are infamous for this. Prairie dropseed and blue oatgrass, on the other hand, can go for years without a problem.

Hold off for now on dividing crowded clumps of any of the warm-season grasses. I learned the hard way: They are likely to rot if divided before new growth begins.

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The Thrifty Traveler:

Packing the perfect travel tote



BY MYSCA THERIAULT
Tribune News Service

Opinions on the best options for carry-on luggage are as common as travelers themselves. Backpacks, briefcases, messenger bags and more make the list of must-have bags to bring on the plane or on your next road trip. Totes are also a popular choice. Their interior space, universal functionality and suitability for every form of transportation combine to make

a strong case for their inclusion on the travel short list of mainstream road warriors.

Design: Part of packing the perfect travel tote is purchasing one that's up to the job. Not all totes are created equal. Heavy buckles and other accent details can weigh down this otherwise perfect travel staple, making it necessary to pack less than you might actually need in order to be able to carry it comfortably. Size is also a factor, since the whole point of going with a tote is to

be able to maximize your carry-on potential.

For my money though, the most critical feature of any tote is the top zipper. Many roadside totes have zippers that only go across the middle portion, leaving large open gaps on either end. This makes it difficult to confidently store them under your airplane seat or in the overhead bin without fear of critical belongings spilling and rolling to parts unknown. Choosing one with a zipper that seals the entire top of the bag lets you fill all of the packing space with whatever loose items you feel you need to bring along on the trip.

I recently purchased the Carryall Tote Bag from L. L. Bean, which meets the above requirements along with several others. It has multiple outside compartments with sections for office supplies, a roomy interior with a wide bottom and a side strap for sliding the whole thing onto the handle of my rolling suitcase. The price? Just \$49.

Storage: The cavernous space might be the answer to your carry-on needs, but being able to access what you want quickly is also part of the packing equation. One way to stuff with precision is to use inserts extensively. They allow you to plug and play with your other day pack and pocketbook items when you get home, while still keeping things compartmentalized for your trip. Ideas include open inserts for things such as camera equipment, small plastic compression bags, zippered clear makeup bags from the dollar store, tablet

sleeves or even zip-top freezer bags.

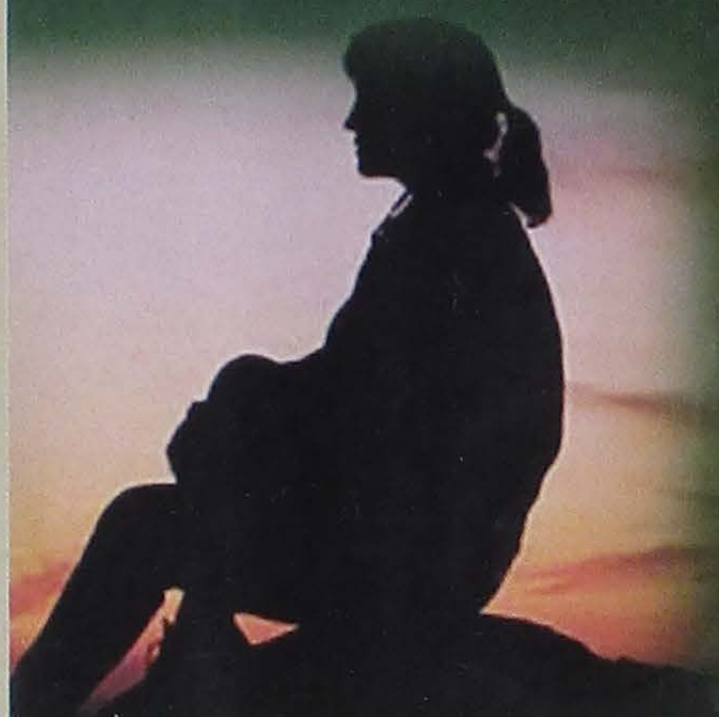
Opting for clear inserts where possible lets you see which container you need to grab when it comes time to medicate, freshen up, recharge or reach for rain protection. Choosing inserts with user-friendly closures will also make your travel experience a smoother one. If sealing your makeup bag is tedious and time consuming, it can rob you of critical minutes you need to do things such as catching public transport, visiting the pharmacy or even checking email when you consider the cumulative time commitment over the duration of your vacation.

Supplies: Everyone's list will be somewhat unique to them personally, but there are a few basics the majority of travelers will want to consider. Charging cords, eyeglass repair kits, first-aid supplies and smart snacks such as nuts and dried fruit top the list, followed by micro-sized toiletries and grooming supplies such as miniature nail buffers and flat cosmetic pads.

Electronic book storage tablets keep multiple books on one device, saving space and weight for voracious readers. Flat-pack windbreaker jackets, quick-dry intimate apparel and flat thong sandals for the pool are all easily packed items that men and women alike can incorporate for their personal travel benefit. Packing thinner clothing in your bag and wearing the heavier items will ensure you'll arrive at your destination with multiple mix-and-match outfits along with plenty of space for purchased souvenirs.

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I want to look in the mirror and
like what I see. I want to walk in
a room with confidence. I want
to smile and mean it. I want to
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Now is the Time ...

Simplify income tax preparation in 2015

I read the Ames Tribune, the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times, well more accurately I usually just skim for topics that interest me. Tax change articles always catch my attention.

Not because I think there will be definitive information about future changes; I just read to know what the spin is this week. Some day there may be changes in the tax code and we will no longer dread "tax time".

For now, one thing is certain, we all want to file tax forms. Really, you say? Of course we want to file a tax form, the alternative, not earning enough money to pay taxes, isn't on most people's goal list!

So if we all strive to pay taxes here is a method to make tax preparation easier. Use the following tips to simplify your tax preparation.

FILE AN EXTENSION

Filing your taxes on time is always a good plan; if you just can't get the details ready for the April 15 deadline a tax extension could be beneficial. A tax extension gives you an extra six months to prepare and file your taxes; you must file by October 15.

Here are the facts to consider before you opt for an extension:

- File form 4868, the extension form, by April 15. Now you have until Oct. 15 to file your federal tax return.

- This is an extension to file, not pay. Project as accurately as possible the actual balance of tax due.

That amount must be paid when you file for the extension.

If not paid by April 15 you could owe penalties and interest on the outstanding balance.

Be sure to consult your tax professional or accountant to learn if a tax extension may be beneficial for you.

KEEP OR SHRED?

Except in the case of fraud, the IRS has three years to audit your tax return. You should keep all tax forms and supporting documents for at least three years.

Retain prior tax returns and canceled checks that prove you paid your taxes for seven years.

Begin today to simplify your tax preparation, because life is ... more than money.

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KAREN
PETERSEN

CREATE THREE TAX FOLDERS

■ Donations and income

This file should hold: 1. Letters of acknowledgement for charitable donations. If you pay with a check or credit card attach proof of payment. 2. Income you receive. Dividend checks may include a 1099; this may be your only notification. Summary of monthly income from non-retirement investments.

■ Deductible expenses

Keep receipts and proof of payment for: vehicle license, estimated income tax payments, real estate tax payments, interest paid on mortgages and out of pocket medical and prescription costs.

■ Year-end documents

Year end documents begin to arrive in early January and often continue through late February; most are clearly marked "tax documents". As you receive this information file them in this, year-end document file.

LIVING SMART:

7 WAYS TO GET CREATIVE WITH KITCHEN STORAGE



ANGIE'S LIST

No matter the size of your kitchen, it always seems like there's never enough space. Maybe at one time you thought it was the perfect size, but after years of purchasing kitchen gadgets and new dishes, along with having a growing family, the thrill is gone.

However, there's no need to fret. We've got you covered with seven space-saving, creative storage solutions to make your kitchen feel brand new, and hopefully you'll fall in love with it all over again.

■ **Go high.** Step back and look at your kitchen as a whole. Notice anything? You may see there's prime real estate up high, such as on top of the refrigerator and above cabinets and doors. Take advantage of these spaces to store cookbooks, canisters or even wine bottles.

■ **Get low.** Make existing features in your kitchen functional with toe-kick drawers. Most cabinets sit off the floor with toe kicks, and now there are kits available to create drawers that open with a tap of your toes. A toe-kick drawer is a great place to house pet feeding dishes.

■ **Hangin' on.** Sure, you can hang pots and pans from the ceiling or add a rack to a wall, but you might try hanging baskets to store dish cloths

and towels. Use hooks to hang pot holders or utensils. Peg boards aren't just for tools in the garage. Use them to create a cool place to hang pots and pans, mugs or utensils.

■ **Slide and glide.** Install sliding drawers on the side of your range to add functionality. The drawers don't take up much room but are deep enough to provide plenty of storage. A sliding storage tower (on wheels!) is another option to make use of narrow spaces, such as between your oven and fridge.

■ **Rack it up.** Door racks on the inside of cabinet or pantry doors provide instant space-saving storage. While you're in the mood, add racks to the wall near the stove to store spices, olive oil or other often-used items for easy accessibility, or create a wine rack with everything you need — bottles, glasses and a corkscrew.

■ **Island living.** The options for using your island are endless. Add cabinets underneath for additional storage, shelves on one side to store kitchen gadgets, or install a built-in trash can to preserve floor space.

■ **Cubby it up.** Take it back to elementary school by creating cubby holes for cookie sheets, cake pans or other bakeware. Think high again, and build cubbies in the space between the cabinet and ceiling to store wine bottles.

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Spring Bridal ExCytement



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Getting ready for the big day

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Pastor? Check!
Cake? Check!
Décor? Check!
Tuxes? Check!
Rings? Check!
Guests? Check!
Printer? Check!
Hotel? Check!
Registry? Check!

Enough already! We are ready! Valentine's Day will always be remembered by this couple as that is their date.

So obviously this column is about weddings more specifically wedding services at the salon. And the bride shown in the photos is my daughter MaryJune who took one piece of my advice to heart. I married young and after 25 years wasn't married anymore.

So I told her to wait until she was 30 because she'd have her education, a car, a career, and would make better choices. And she did!

And actually this wedding has been fun because I just write checks. She has it planned down to the minute but expects some oops that will make it memorable. She has been wise to include

her fiancé who lives in Louisiana in every possible step.

He will only be surprised by the dress and a second line parade down the stairs to the reception complete with parasols – one for him and one for her. I said he's from Louisiana but more accurately he's from Metairie, a suburb of New Orleans, where he grew up.



MARY CLARE
LOKKEN

But on to the bride's salons services. We naturally chose Finesse Spa Salon. My mom started it in 1959. After her passing in 1992 and my sale to the gals there in 2002 we have kept in touch. One of MaryJune's beauty school classmates is Amy Gale who is her stylist since they graduated at PCI Academy.

So I went along when MJ had her trial appointment a few weeks ago. This is a step strongly recommended by Amy and every stylist I have ever met. It gets some of the jitters over with and helps make sure what's in the bride's vision and the stylist's plan match. Amy recommends this trial be done within a month of the wedding.

As MJ's regular stylist, Amy recommended a color and cut 7-10 days before the wedding. MJ gets a cut every three weeks and actually planned out the cuts more than two months before the wedding.

A makeup trial is important,

too. MJ needed a new mascara brand due to sensitivities and this gave them time to try out one that worked perfectly.

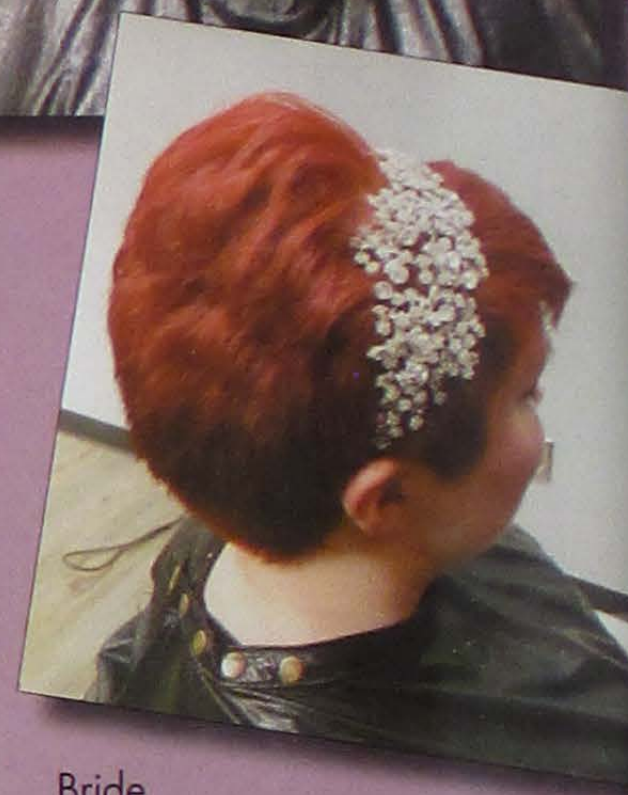
Amy would tell you that often the wedding party gals think they should come in with dirty hair but that is no longer needed. Products can make the hair "dirty."

Makeup should be more of a matte finish for photos. Keep it light not heavy. Be prepared for random outbreaks due to stress. Those can be covered. For eye shadows MJ's green eyes work best with purple so Amy will use an eggplant color. For an evening wedding, go more dramatic.

This is especially a fun time for both MJ and Amy because MJ's wedding was Valentine's Day and Amy's is March 21.

Even though MaryJune is a licensed cosmetologist she really enjoys being the "guest" at the salon. This trial visit was about a two hour time commitment including color retouch, makeup trial, cut, and style with headpiece.

Finesse has special wedding packages for brides, grooms and bridal parties. MaryJune and fiancé Michael will take their bridal parties to Finesse and The Groom Room, respectively. Hope the salon and shop are ready for bride, groom, bridesmaids, groomsmen, and parents of the bride and groom.



Bride, MaryJune Jackson, and her stylist, Amy Gale, work through a test run of hair styles for MaryJune's Feb. 14 wedding. *Photos contributed by Mary Clare Lokken*

OMG! I think I forgot to book the manicures/pedicures at PCI Academy. Can't leave out our school! So if you are planning a wedding don't forget the salon professionals who help make your most beautiful day even more so.

Now for the real challenge - my one and only baby is getting married and moving away. What's a mother to do?

Mary Clare Lokken is the owner of PCI Academy in Ames. Reach her via email at mclokken@gmail.com.

Don't let her worry cause you to worry

BY MEGHAN LEAHY | Special to the Washington Post

Q: My 10-year-old daughter likes sameness — same clothes, same decorations in her bedroom, same friends, same toys. There hasn't been much change in our family since she's been born, as we

have lived in the same house since she was 3, both parents have the same jobs, she's been in the same school for five years. Last night she was crying over moving to middle school in 1 1/2 years. I actually enjoy change; her dad, not

so much, but he doesn't have anxiety over it. We're not offering up a lot of change on the home front, so could you suggest some ideas about how we could help our daughter get over her change anxiety?

A: When I read about your daughter, I see a couple of important points about change and children:

She has been offered a beautiful, stable, dependable and routine home. From parents to friends to environment, she knows who and what she will see and do. You can ask any child specialist: This stability plays a very large role in helping a child to grow into a physically and emotionally healthy adult. The more stability, the healthier the child.

It is important to note, though, that the most important stability comes in the form of caregivers. This is why children in military families, for example, can move and, though it is hard, the consistency of the primary parent allows for emotional safety. Wherever there is Mom/Dad/caregiver, there is home.

My point is that your daughter sounds perfectly normal to me and is also having a normal reaction to the anticipation of leaving her safe elementary school. The fact that she is having some tears about it (such a healthy sign) means that she can imagine a different life and that causes her fear and sadness. Well, okay! That sounds normal to me! I have often, in my life, been excited for a change and been tearful as it approached (having a

baby being a great example).

This brings me to my next point: You can help prepare her for some change without arbitrarily creating challenges for her to "get over." For instance, she is already imagining her world changing, so the first step is to allow her to talk out her thoughts and feelings. Do some listening: Is her imagination going out of control? Is she imagining something scarier or bigger than what is really going to happen? If this is the case, a great thing to do is to visit the school. Every middle school has an open house when families can visit. Simply seeing the building will do much to allay some fears in your daughter, as well as give you both a place to imagine.

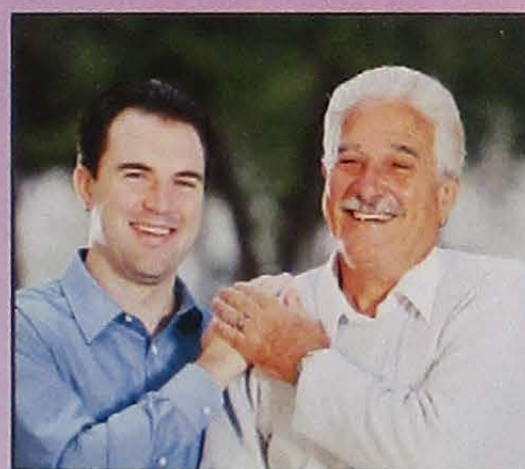
As well as visiting the school, I would strongly consider a one- or two-week overnight summer camp experience. While daunted at first, many children are profoundly changed by the safe freedom an overnight camp can offer. Fresh air, exercise, zero technology, working with hands, working within groups and generally having fun is an amazing way to bolster courage and meet new people. If your daughter flat-out refuses to go, promote day camps that have her taking safe and fun chances. Low risk, high reward.

Whatever you do, resist the urge to label her as "anxious"

(especially to her). When we label what is mostly normal behavior as something "wrong," we tend to overreact and see only problems.

I truly want you to see what you have done for your daughter, which is healthy and good. I also want you to see the expression of worry and fear as good.

And the fact that she cries to you, the parents, is good. This is what you want. You don't want a young woman who cries by herself. You don't want a young woman to hide her fears. These emotions need to move. Embrace them, allow them, and that will help her be ready for change.



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Cleaning and revamping your fitness routine

KECIA PLACE-FENCL
Contributing writer

Are you in a fitness rut? Have you plateaued with your fitness? Do you do the same exercise routine all the time? Maybe it is time to do some fitness spring cleaning. Take out the stale activities, and replace them with a fresh new fitness routine.

Are you looking to change up your strength training sessions? Incorporate tabatas into your routine. Tabatas are a great way to add power and strength in your routine, without requiring a lot of time. A tabata workout is only 4 minutes in duration and can be strength based, cardio based, or both. They are destined to put a spring in your step.

Are you wanting someone to hold you

accountable or motivate you? Stop hibernating and meet with a personal trainer or friends to add a fresh look to your training. Personal trainers can help you develop or change up your routine, provide fresh, new perspectives on health, fitness and nutrition, provide you with support on proper technique and form, help with injury prevention and rehab, provide sport specific training, and help you maximize your workout while minimizing the time needed to complete it. If a personal trainer is too expensive, get together with friends and come up with a new routine that works for everyone.



The City of Ames Parks and Rec will be offering a training class to help prepare you for the Dam to Dam Half Marathon. There is an informational meeting at City Hall on Tuesday, March 10 at 6:30 pm, with the class starting on Tuesday, March 25 at 5:30 pm. Come learn how to safely train for a half marathon.

Do you want to run a half marathon, but don't know where to start? Join a running group or a running class. The City of Ames Parks and Rec will be offering a training class to help prepare you for the Dam to Dam Half Marathon. There is an informational meeting at City Hall on Tuesday, March 10 at 6:30 pm, with the class starting on Tuesday, March 25 at 5:30 pm. Come learn how to safely train for a half marathon. There is no time to stop and smell the flowers during a half marathon.

Do you want to stop and smell the flowers? Then head outdoors for a power walk. Walking at a steady, energetic pace is sure to reduce stress and improve your overall health, while being convenient and free. This is a perfect opportunity to soak up some fresh air with your dog, neighbor or friends.

Are you focused on only one sport? Think about mixing it; try something new! Cross training, such as swimming, cycling, running, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, climbing,

kickboxing, yoga, dance, or rowing, can provide your body with many great benefits. Some of these benefits include injury prevention, power and endurance development, active recovery, developing muscle, and burning fat. So get out and take advantage of those amazing Iowa spring days.

While it is important to incorporate a variety of exercises into your routine, it is also important to spend some time recovering. What are some things you can do to properly recover? Walking and an easy spin on the bike are both great active recovery exercises. Stretching after exercise also aids in recovery. Not sure what stretches to do? Attend a yoga class, where you will be sure to get a full body stretch. Massage is not only a great way to recover, but can also help prevent sports injuries. If massage is not in your budget, use the foam roller to help roll out sore or stiff muscles. Proper recovery will help your fitness continue to spring forward.

**Before you begin any exercise routine, you should consult your doctor.*

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Baked salmon and kale in moroccan-spiced tomato sauce

BY ELLIE KRIEGER | Special To The Washington Post

4 servings

MAKE AHEAD: The components can be assembled and refrigerated, tightly covered with aluminum foil, up to 1 day in advance. To bake straight from the refrigerator, add 5 to 10 minutes to the oven time.

From nutritionist and cookbook author Ellie Krieger.

Ingredients

1 tablespoon olive oil
4 cloves garlic, minced
14 1/2 ounces canned, no-salt-added diced tomatoes with their juices
15 ounces canned, no-salt-added tomato sauce
1 teaspoon ground cumin
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
1/2 teaspoon ground coriander

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

1 bunch kale, tough center stems removed and discarded, leaves chopped (about 8 cups)

Four 6-ounce center-cut skinless salmon fillets

Steps

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Have a 9-by-13-inch baking dish at hand.

Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-low heat. Stir in the garlic; cook for about a minute, until it has softened, then add the diced tomatoes with their juices, the tomato sauce, cumin, 1/2 teaspoon of the salt, 1/4 teaspoon of the pepper, the ginger, coriander, cinnamon and crushed red pepper flakes. Increase the heat to medium-high; once the mixture comes to a boil, reduce the heat to medium-low and cook for about 10 minutes, stirring

occasionally, to form a slightly thickened sauce.

Arrange the kale evenly in the baking dish.

Season the fish fillets with the remaining 1/4 teaspoon each of salt and pepper and place on top of the kale. Pour the sauce over the salmon, and the kale that is not covered by the fish. Cover tightly with aluminum foil; bake for about 12 minutes, until the fish is nearly cooked through and the kale has wilted. Uncover and bake for 5 minutes.

Place a fillet on each plate; spoon about 1 cup of sauce and about one-quarter of the kale alongside. Serve right away.

Nutrition | Per serving: 400 calories, 42 g protein, 27 g carbohydrates, 16 g fat, 3 g saturated fat, 95 mg cholesterol, 580 mg sodium, 9 g dietary fiber, 11 g sugar



Baked Salmon and Kale in Moroccan-Spiced Tomato Sauce. Photo by Deb Lindsey/Special to the Washington Post

Go Green for St. Patrick's Day

In today's day and age more and more people are interested in healthy eating, and are asking nutrition professionals which foods to start implementing in their diets. One common tip we often hear is how important it is to consume a variety of color with meals and snacks—especially in regard to fruits and vegetables. With a colorful holiday right around the corner, what perfect timing to “Go Green” this March!

During St. Patrick's Day, the typical green foods that get the most attention nutrition-wise include those in the leafy green family—for example, spinach, kale, collard and mustard greens, etc. While it is true that dark, leafy green vegetables pack a nutrition punch, there are many other green vegetables (and fruits) to try this St. Patrick's Day. Below are just a

few green produce items to try all month long.

KIWI

One medium kiwi provides about 60 calories, 100% of daily vitamin C needs and more potassium than half a banana. Kiwis also make a smart snack choice—just cut, scoop and eat.

AVOCADOS

Avocados contain mono-unsaturated fat, a good heart-healthy fat. This fruit is ready to eat when slightly soft, and can be added to dishes for its fresh and creamy flavor. Add to your favorite entrées, use as a substitute for your favorite condiment or even add to smoothies.

GREEN BELL PEPPERS

One pepper has only 30

calories, and delivers a day's worth of Vitamin C, supporting healthy immune function. Peppers are great sautéed in entrée dishes, or make a delicious crunchy snack with a dip.

BROCCOLI

One cup of broccoli provides an excellent source of Vitamin K, supporting bone health. Broccoli also contains as much Vitamin C as an orange, and is a good source of fiber to help with weight control and healthy digestion. Besides being eaten raw or cooked, broccoli can be added to soups, stews and casseroles for a health kick.

ASPARAGUS

This nutrient-dense vegetable contains folic acid, helping the body make healthy new

cells and prevent birth defects during pregnancy.

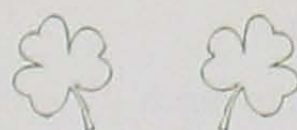
KOHLRABI

This unfamiliar vegetable is a member of the cabbage family. It has a sweet, juicy texture that tastes similar to broccoli stems. Enjoy raw, roasted, steamed or add to a favorite soup.

CUCUMBER

Cucumber is best eaten raw or barely cooked, leaving the skin on for added fiber benefits. Store up to one week in refrigerator; use leftover cucumber for a personal spa day.

Nicole Arnold represents Hy-Vee as a nutrition expert working throughout the community to promote healthy eating and nutrition. Nicole is a Registered and Licensed Dietitian, ACE certified personal trainer and member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.



Roasted Asparagus Salad with Citrus Dressing

ALL YOU NEED:

- 2 pounds asparagus, (about 2 bunches), trimmed
- 1 pint tiny cherry or pear tomatoes, red or mixed colors
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 3/4 teaspoon salt, divided
- Freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon fresh orange juice++
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 2 bunches watercress, tough stems removed (about 4 cups lightly packed)
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh dill

ALL YOU DO:

- Preheat oven to 450°F.
- Place asparagus in a large bowl.
- Add tomatoes and oil and toss to coat.
- Spread in a heavy roasting pan or rimmed baking sheet, spooning the tomatoes between and on top of the asparagus. Sprinkle with 1/2 teaspoon salt and add a generous grinding of pepper.
- Roast until the asparagus is crisp-tender and the tomatoes are warmed and slightly crinkled, about 15 minutes. Set aside until ready to serve.
- Whisk lemon juice, orange juice, honey, mustard and remaining 1/4

teaspoon salt in a medium bowl until blended. Reserve half the dressing in a small bowl.

Add watercress to the medium bowl; toss to coat. Spread the watercress on a platter. Arrange the roasted asparagus on the watercress and top with tomatoes. Drizzle the reserved dressing over the asparagus and tomatoes; sprinkle with dill. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Source: www.EatingWell.com

The information is not intended as medical advice. Please consult a medical professional for individual advice.

Name: Mary Frahm

Age: 84 (September 22, 1930)

Position: Retired

Family: Daughter, Janis (a chiropractor in Austin, Tx); Daughter, Susan Tucker (homemaker, caterer in Ames); Son, Dan (Public Relations for Bank of America, living in Davidson, N.C.); 7 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren; Deceased: Husband, Warren Frahm; Son, David Frahm

What I would do with \$1000 to spend on myself:

I don't like shopping, but probably would see if I could add something to the wardrobe, take some friends to lunch, get a pedicure and manicure. (I had my first pedicure in December using a gift certificate from the previous Christmas and found it was great. I'm ready to try it again.)

My favorite quote:

"When you forgive, you set the prisoner free, and find out the prisoner was you." from Lewis Smedes "Forgive and Forget".

What makes you happy?

A good conversation with family or friends makes me happy.

I feel confident:

when I have prepared well.

What have you accomplished that has made you proud:

I am proud of the contributions I made as a pastor's wife and member of the church, of the work we did as administrators of the Presbyterian Camp on Okoboji for five years, cooking meals

for Seniors at Bethesda and St. Andrews Lutheran churches, and raising independent and free-thinking children to whom, I think, we gave both roots and wings.

How do you take care of yourself financially?

I always pay the bills on time and never have credit debt.

If you knew then what you know now, what would you have done differently?

I would have taken more piano lessons and actually learned how to play, and gone on more mission trips while still able.

How do you reward yourself?

Going out to lunch

My idea of a nightmare job:

Laundress for a hospital

My simplest pleasure:

A game of Rook or Hearts with the family

I crave:

CHOCOLATE!

When I am an old lady:

At 84, I think I have reached that, and I am tremendously happy with life at Northcrest.



I am thankful for:

Family and friends, and for the fact that my husband and I decided to come to Northcrest while he was still living and could enjoy being here, and for all the opportunities I've had as a minister's wife.

Financial Advice:

Don't worry about what other people have. Spend only what you have and save what you can even if it is a small amount each month.

Giving back to the community:

I volunteered for 20+ years at Worldly Goods, and volunteered for several years at Heartland senior Services. I am a mentor through Great Relationships in Pairs to a second grader at Fellows School.

Walk more, use sunscreen and other easy ways to improve your health

BY RENE LYNCH
Los Angeles Times

It's easy to get overwhelmed when trying to embrace a more healthful lifestyle. What new diet book should you buy? Should you join a CrossFit gym? Do you need a tracker, and if so, which one? And — gulp! — how much is this all going to cost? It's enough to make you plop back down on the couch and reach for the remote.

Here are five ways to improve your health starting today that might even save you money in the long run.

■ **Walk more.** It's the fastest, easiest way to get in some exercise. And taking a walk right after a meal is especially good for curbing glucose levels, which is helpful for anyone trying to rein in blood sugar. Don't wait, though: Glucose hits its peak 30 to 60 minutes after a meal.

■ **Protect yourself from the sun.** Slather on sunscreen and don a wide-brimmed hat. Discuss your skin sensitivity with a doctor, and find out if you need to take additional measures, such as long-sleeved shirts, driving gloves and long pants.

■ **Speaking of doctors:** Stop the

foot-dragging when it comes to scheduling your annual physical. Just do it.

■ **Slash the sugar.** No one is trying to take away all your ice cream. But how about a scoop or two once or twice a week instead of three heaping scoops every night? Find small, simple ways to trim the sugar out of your diet and you'll trim your waistline.

■ **Get more sleep.** This should be welcome news. Research increasingly suggests that a run-yourself-ragged lifestyle leads to stress, and stress leads to weight gain (and a stubborn resistance to weight loss). So get more Zzzs.

Walking is a fast, easy way to get some exercise and improve your health. Photo courtesy Fotolia/TNS

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